



# Michigan Consumer Federation

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Lansing, Michigan 48933  
517/482-6262 • Fax 517/482-4142  
E-mail [mcf@acd.net](mailto:mcf@acd.net)

*Richard D. Gamber Jr., Executive Director*

March 22, 2000

The Honorable William E. Kennard  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: MM Docket No. 99-360

Dear Chairman Kennard:

The Michigan Consumer Federation, representing over 400,000 Michigan residents, wishes to express its support for the comments and recommendations of People for Better TV which will be filed in response to this docket. In addition, we will be filing separate comments to the Commission.

We applaud the Commission for issuing this Notice of Inquiry. The advent of digital broadcasting, we believe, presents many new opportunities. We fear, however, that without guidance from the Commission, these opportunities will be lost.

As a case in point, we point out the situation that exists in metropolitan Detroit with broadcast station WWJ, Channel 62. This is a CBS "owned and operated" affiliate. As such, we would expect it to be the leader in meeting public interest obligations – a standard to which other stations would aspire. Sadly, it isn't.

Here in Detroit, one of the largest media markets in the nation, the CBS owned and operated affiliate doesn't even offer a local news broadcast. CBS should be ashamed. And those who advocate "voluntary standards" should explain why this is acceptable. It may be grudgingly acceptable if it was a new independent station, but for the affiliate of CBS located in a large market to ignore local news is unfathomable.

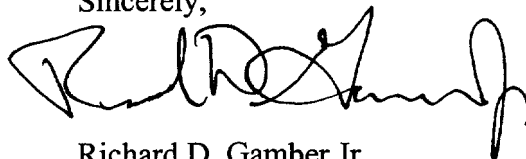
If a CBS owned and operated affiliate can "get away with it" in Detroit, what stops other stations from following suit? If the pride and reputation of CBS is not sufficient motivation, what is? CBS has chosen to "lower the bar" and we urge the Commission to not only correct this egregious situation, but to insure that others don't use CBS as the excuse for further degradation of public interest obligations.



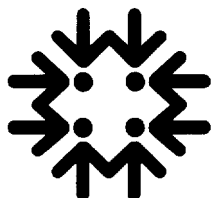
With the extensive costs associated with building digital broadcast studios, will this be the trend? We trust that the Commission will take a stand and ensure that the opportunities of digital broadcasting expand, rather than contract, the vital public interest obligations of broadcasters.

The recommendations of People for Better TV, in our view, represent the best hope for ensuring that the public airwaves are used to further the public interest. Let's work together to make the digital age one that enhances not only the quality of the television picture, but the minds and lives of all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard D. Gamber Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Richard D. Gamber Jr.  
Executive Director



**PREVCO**

March 20, 2000

Chairman William Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

RE: FCC Notice Doc#99360

Enclosed for your review is some information about our organization, Prevention Coalition of Southeast Michigan. Our organization has worked with the local television stations in the Detroit media market for the past ten years. We collaborate with our local stations to air public service announcements that promote prevention messages about alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse.

Over the past five years, we have seen a dramatic decrease in the actual amount of airtime that is devoted to PSA's. Previously, we were able to consecutively air :60 spots. Currently, we are confined to :30 or :15 spots. The seriousness of these community health issues has not decreased. Unfortunately, the available airtime has decreased by up to 50%.

It is our hope that with the introduction of broadcast digital television signals, this downward trend will be reversed. This will not happen without the input of the public and enforceable guidelines that will hold broadcasters responsible. At this pivotal crossroad, the television industry has a tremendous opportunity to have a positive impact on our communities. The current stream of gratuitous sex and violence, lack of local programming and advertising-packed children's programming has an increasingly negative impact our community.

On behalf of the children and concerned citizens of Southeast Michigan, we encourage you to make a change. As a member of People for Better TV-Southeast Michigan, we urge you hold local hearings, solicit input from the public and consider the PBTv guidelines as a place to start. Nothing less than the future of our children and the future of America is at stake.

Sincerely,

Susan Hiltz Grover  
Executive Director

Prevention Coalition of  
Southeast Michigan

P.O. Box 2970  
Southfield, Michigan  
48037-2970

PREVCO NEW NUMBERS

PH 810.466.5030

FX 810.466.5031

WE EM theprevco@aol.com

Our mission is to promote  
alcohol, tobacco and  
other drug abuse  
prevention messages  
through media-based  
strategies that support a  
community-wide approach  
to building a healthy  
Southeast Michigan.



# The Youth Connection

*funded by the*  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Suite 1500, 333 West Fort St.  
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3156

(313) 963-4990 • (313) 963-4668 (FAX)

*lead agency*  
Greater Detroit Area Health Council, Inc.

March 9, 2000

Chairman William Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: DOCKET # 99-360

FCC NOTICE OF INQUIRY


Dear Chairman Kennard:

With the advent of digital television, and the ever-increasing amount of violence, sex and substance abuse we are all exposed to on television, I am writing to ask for better quality educational programming especially targeting youth 10-17 years old. While our local network affiliates are doing a good job of bringing educational programs to children (5-10), there is a lack of quality, educational programs for older youth. The Youth Connection is working to create systemic change to prevent youth violence, substance abuse and early sexual activity -- a difficult task given the fact that young people are growing up viewing "instant gratification" on their television sets and computers and see very few consequences for violence, substance abuse or sexual activity in most television programs.

We are also interested in positive and accurate portrayal of youth in the media. Both local and national newscasts have brought the unspeakable -- children killing children -- into our homes on far too many occasions recently. Once these horrific acts are committed, both local and national newscasts turn them into television shows with music beds, etc., and we watch the horrifying incident over and over again. We do not deny that problems exist, but we do ask for responsible programming. In the Detroit market, WDIV-NBC 4 and WXYZ-ABC 7 are doing especially good jobs with local, educational programming. But there is room for improvement on other network affiliates. I am especially concerned about the number one rated station targeting 12-17 year olds. While I know they do their share for the community, many of the cartoons and commercials I have viewed on Saturday mornings are very dark and violent. Imagine if kids are starting their days watching such negative, violent situations what is on their minds the rest of the day?

We appreciate you helping us keep the airwaves a public trust and not solely a commercial enterprise for the network corporate owners.

Sincerely,



Peggy K. Goodwin  
Marketing Director



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Benjamin A. Jones MSW, CSW  
*President/CEO*

Rev. Dr. Lottie Jones-Hood  
*President Emeritus*  
Mr. Stratford Hilliard  
*Board Member Emeritus*

## ADMINISTRATION

16647 Wyoming  
Detroit, Michigan 48221  
313.341.9891  
313.861.0413 Fax  
800.388.9891 Toll Free

## FAMILY PLUS

*(Fathers And Mothers In League with Youth)*  
18954 James Couzens  
Detroit, Michigan 48235  
313.345.9400  
313.345.9017 Fax

## VANTAGE POINT

16647 Wyoming  
Detroit, Michigan 48221  
313.342.3606  
313.861.0413 Fax

## VANTAGE POINT EAST

@ Renaissance Hospital &  
Medical Centers East Clinic  
8300 Mack Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan 48214  
313.579.9133  
313.579.9411 Fax

March 7, 2000

Chairman William Kennard  
FCC  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St. N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20554

Re: Public Hearings ---- Docket # 99360

Dear Chairman Kennard:

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Greater Detroit Area is pleased to add our voice to the chorus of community groups and concerned individuals who are calling for the FCC to hold public hearings.

Along with the plethora of issues and concerns presented by the coalition led by People for Better TV, this Council believes that it is imperative that we ask media outlets to list in their public file the date, time and type of public service announcements they air. To our knowledge if this information is kept it is not made available for public viewing. As you know public service announcements are essential to drug abuse prevention and treatment efforts.

Since 1947 the NCADD-GDA has provided advocacy, treatment, and prevention services to the greater Detroit Community. Our programs and projects provide hope and help to adolescents, adults, and families. Lead by a volunteer board of directors who are civic and business leaders, politicians, and agency executives we recognize environmental change as an appropriate method to prevent and treat substance abuse problems.

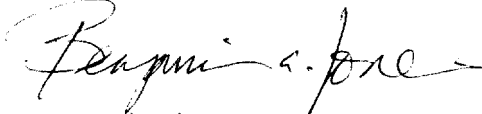


Adolescent & Adult Counseling • Alcohol Highway Safety Classes • Education, Information & Referrals  
FAMILY Plus • FAMILY for Teen Moms • Free 4 the Weekend • Individual, Family & Group Therapy •  
Intensive Outpatient • REACH Prevention • SAAM • Screening & Assessments



Therefore, we strongly support your efforts to encourage the FCC to hold public hearings on the many issues related to the media and its method of operation. If you require any additional information from this organization please contact me during regular business hours at the number provided.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Benjamin A. Jones", written in black ink.

Benjamin A. Jones  
President/CEO

March 22, 2000

People for Better TV  
Attn: Mark Lloyd  
818 18th Street, NW, Suite 505  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mark Lloyd,

I am responding to the Notice of Inquiry Docket Number 99-360 dealing with the public interest obligations of our local broadcasters. My husband is a retired clergyman and I am a retired public school teacher. We have monitored the 11 P.M. local news broadcasts of NBC Channel 4 and on March 6, 2000 we visited the Channel 4 studio and asked to see the public record files. The personnel were very polite and helpful to us.

The local news was primarily about fires, robbery, people killed and other disasters. Except for Lila's health news there was very little uplifting reports or news of personal interest to me. Specifically in 30 minutes the news was:

	night 1	night 2	
Local News	-----41%-----	-----19.3%-----	Not every second is accounted for but it is a close approximation.
Commercials	-----15.7%-----	-----29%-----	
Weather	-----14.3%-----	-----20.5%-----	
Health & Safety	-----0%-----	-----10.1%-----	
Sports	-----8%-----	-----6.1%-----	
National News	-----8%-----	-----6.6%-----	
Teasers	-----7%-----	-----1.6%-----	
Fluff News	-----1.6%-----	-----2.5%-----	
Chat & Filler	-----1.4%-----	-----2%-----	

I was especially interested in the children's television broadcasting. I looked at a first quarter 1998 and a last quarter 1999 report. I thought it was significant that all of the shows listed were targeted for an audience between 13 -16 years of age. Why not air something for elementary aged children? In the 1/3 to 3/8 1998 time period they aired a good show on Peer Pressure, but it was aired from 6:00 A.M. to 6:30 A.M. on Saturday morning. I doubt if many people in the targeted audience were awake at that hour to view it. I was pleased to see that they reported broadcasting numerous public service announcements designed for children that ran in rotation in all day parts.

I am glad that Channel 4 has continued to air our locally produced "Open Doors" program that the Christian Communication Council sponsors, but over the years we have been moved from a more favorable 8 A.M. Sunday morning time slot to 6 A.M.

I hope that a public hearing will help to develop some mutually agreeable guidelines to benefit our viewing audience, especially the younger children.

Sincerely,

*Mariann McCormack*

Mariann McCormack, Supporter of People for Better TV

*P.S. a copy of this letter was sent to Chairman Kennard, FCC*

# WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF URBAN, LABOR  
& METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

FREDERIC S. PEARSON, DIRECTOR  
2320 FACULTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202  
313-577-3453 OR 313-577-3468  
FAX: 313-577-8269 EMAIL: AB3440@WAYNE.EDU



CENTER FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES  
DETROIT COUNCIL FOR WORLD AFFAIRS  
WWW.WPCS.WAYNE.EDU

March 6, 2000

Chairman Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Kennard:


I am joining members of my staff in responding to the Notice of Inquiry for Docket # 99-360 on broadcasters' public interest obligations.

We do a great deal of work on the management of conflict and violence particularly among youth, and are very concerned at the crucial role of broadcast media regarding this problem, as well as reflecting diversity issues in society. There are two particular aspects of this problem: (1) news coverage, and (2) entertainment programming related to the topic.

Local broadcasters particularly bear a significant responsibility, since they often indulge in sensational coverage of crime and violence as leads to their news coverage. Social violence should not be treated as a commercial attraction for ratings or sponsorship. In order to build greater sensitivity and professionalism, local broadcasters should be required to diversify their work forces, increase the time allocated to public affairs and educational programming, limit commercials, and consult with academic and professional groups for greater input and expertise regarding news coverage.

The content of entertainment programming is, of course, controversial, and one wants to respect creative freedom. However, again it is important for programs to reflect cultural awareness, avoid stereotypes, and treat violence and adult themes with care, sensitivity and in a fully explained context. Programs should be accurately labeled for content, and offered at appropriate time slots. Again it is important to employ staff, both on and off air, reflecting all aspects of diversity including disabilities, gender issues, and ethnicity, and management and staff should receive diversity training.

I urge your office to set clear guidelines in this respect as soon as possible. Thanks very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
  
Dr. Frederic S. Pearson  
Director





**MCC:D-W**

**The Metropolitan Christian Council: Detroit-Windsor**

The Rev. Richard O. Singleton, Executive Director  
28 West Adams, 1300 Mutural Building  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone 313-962-0340, Fax 313-962-9044, E-mail Councilweb@aol.com

Chairman William Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th St.  
Washington, D.C. 20554


Dear Chairman Kennard,

Attached to this letter is a letter of inquiry that was sent to local broadcast stations indicated in the lower left hand corner. None of these stations responded in any way to my request. One would think that at least I should have received a phone call. We are sincerely interested in advancing the quality of programming in our area and improving the values of community media.

Also, I should report to you that since deregulation of the stations by the FCC we have had our time reduced by the local TV and Radio stations from 3 1/2 program hours a week, to one half hour program on WDIV TV (Open Doors) at 6 am. on Sunday morning, and one half hour program on PBS, WTVS (Daedal Doors) at 8 am. on Sunday morning, and to 2 minutes on the radio on WWJ 950 which is sometimes preempted by some weekend news...usually sports or repeated weather and traffic bulletins every 10 minutes (we used to have an half hour program on the radio, and 5 minutes of news weekly at a prime time slot).

It is clear to us that the local radio and TV stations do not care in any way to serve the needs of the local community nor do they care to be used in any way as a public service. There is a need to again bring some regulation into the situation. Ground lost may never be regained.

Sincerely,



The Rev. Richard O. Singleton

CC.  
Commissioner Gloria Tristani  
Commissioner Susan Ness  
Commissioner Michael Powell  
Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth  
Congressman Conyers  
Senator Carl Levin

**MCC:DW**

**The Metropolitan Christian Council: Detroit-Windsor  
(Formerly the Christian Communication Council  
of Metropolitan Detroit Churches)**

**The Rev. Richard O. Singleton**

1300 Mutual Building ~ 28 W. Adams ~ Detroit, MI 48226  
Phone 313-962-0340 ~ Fax 313-962-9044 ~ Email councilweb@aol.com

February 07, 2000

Station Manager  
Detroit -Windsor Broadcast Area  
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Station Manager,

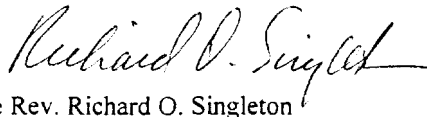
As you can see from the letterhead I am the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Christian Council: Detroit-Windsor. Our council represents over 50 denominations (Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Churches, approximately 2000 churches) in the greater metropolitan area of Detroit and Windsor. We have church memberships in seven counties in Southeastern Michigan and Southwestern Ontario. We also produce two television programs and one radio program of our own.

We are very concerned about the way in which broadcast television has eroded its public service spectrum over the last ten years. We are also very concerned about the nature of children's programming, and the amount and kind of advertising associated with it. We are also concerned with the nature of news broadcasting, both its content and manner.

We have been working with a nationwide movement called People for Better TV, who share many of our concerns in these areas of public service and programming, especially for children. We all know that the values that television has represented have changed; sexual mores, excessive violence, and interpersonal relationships are reflected much differently now than in recent decades.

Would you therefore do something for us? Would you write us and give us a listing of your children's programs; the time they air, and a brief description of their content? Would you also give us a listing of the public service announcements that you have made in the last week (the week of February 7th would be fine)? We would greatly appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible.

We are sincerely yours in the public interest,



The Rev. Richard O. Singleton

WJTV  
TV 26  
WJBK FOX 2  
WKBD - UPN 50  
WXYZ Channel 7

4

## **SOUTHWEST**

### **Texas**

**Tab D-4a**

Carlos Calbillo  
Talento Bilingue de Houston)  
Houston, TX  
2/25/00

David Donnelly, Ph.D.  
University of Houston (School of Communication)  
Houston, TX  
2/28/00

Karen Kapusta-Pofahl  
Denton, TX  
1/30/00

Johnny N. Mata  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Houston, TX  
3/2/00

### **Arizona**

**Tab D-4b**

Phyllis Rowe  
Arizona Consumers Council  
Phoenix, AZ  
2/27/00

Julia Zozaya  
Phoenix, AZ  
3/1/00

From: Carlos Calbillo, Director of Video/Film  
Program, Talento Bilingue de Houston

Date: 2/25/00

Re: Comments for the FCC

I believe that Mary Lampe of SWAMP here in Houston has sent you a report on our visits to 2 local stations, those being the ABC and FOX affiliates.

The licensees are mandated to serve the public interest by determining the needs, problems and issues in their local communities and then to produce programming to meet and address those local issues and needs.

The stations here in Houston as elsewhere have eliminated or drastically reduced their public affairs and community relations functions, during a period in the U.S. broadcast and cablecast industry of unprecedented growth of their revenues. In the 1970's, these areas within a station were almost exclusively where minorities and women were employed, and gave the stations a place to point to when cultural and ethnic diversity in employment began to command importance in their local communities. Currently, almost all of the stations in Houston with news operations claim to meet their FCC requirements through programming offered by the regular news department operations. The news operation, being the foremost revenue generating system within a station, does not have meeting the needs or addressing the problems of a community, as it's foremost or even significant interest. African American and Latino communities specifically are underserved by this process. A station's news organization, given the cut-throat nature of the ratings wars which lead to increasing sensationalistic local community coverage, are simply unable to deal in a rational or realistic way with local community problems and needs. There are relatively few stories on the positive aspects of a community, individual, or organization that is working to make a difference in the direction of that community. This type of coverage isn't "sexy", in the newsroom vernacular, "drivebys" and convenience store holdups are. My argument is verified by the public file, where one can see that the station will state that they have addressed the issue of "crime" by a 6pm sensationalistic news segment on carjacking, or that a 10pm news blurb on back alley abortions satisfies their covering BOTH a "unwed mothers" and a "crime", and "youth" requirement.

I further disagree with the process by which the stations "ascertain" the problems of their local communities. The stations organize quarterly "ascertainment" meetings at which the public affairs officer at a particular station invites a group of individuals who are supposed to represent their communities. In Houston, this "cattle call" results in each individuals given fifteen minutes before this audience of public affairs officers and the person is asked to state what the issues are for their community. There is no effort to document or to catalog the responses. This raw data is sometimes place in the station's public file, sometimes not. The station and/or their legal representative will make this call.

## **People For Better TV**

Visits to Stations by Carlos Calbillo and Mary Lampe

January 26, 2000

### **KTRK-TV, Channel 13, ABC**

(Arrived at 10:10 a.m.; admitted 10:18 a.m.; assisted by Terry Carter)

#### **General Observations:**

Files neatly organized, readily accessible, friendly/helpful staff

#### **Files Reviewed:**

**1. "Ascertainments," January -December 1999:** Note: records of interviews with public by staff regarding community concerns, forums held monthly ~~(2)~~, public attends by invitation

A.) 1st quarter (13 interviews): issues—welfare; race relations + crime; summer jobs; child abuse; welfare to work; low income housing; lawsuit abuse; families and violence; helmet laws; pollution and erosion; infant mortality; juvenile crime;

B. ) 2nd quarter (1 interview): issue-low income families

C.) 3rd quarter (17 interviews): issues—lack of child care; lack of human interest stories in media; job training; special needs of hearing impaired; drugs; hate crimes + gays; violence in schools; arts for children in schools; health care and insurance for elderly; immigrant families; gangs; homelessness; child fatality; environment

D.) 4th quarter (7 interviews): issues— downtown parking and traffic; public transportation; low secondary school standards; abandoned children and teen mothers; pollution; hunger-shelters; child poverty; affordable housing; public school; economic issues and empowerment for girls

#### **2. "Issues and Problems Report, 10/1/99-12/31/99" (filed 1/10/2000)**

"October 1 through December 31, 1999, KTRK-TV broadcast 3 ½ hours weekly local public affairs programs."

A.) "ABC/13 Community Closeup (Saturdays, wkdays, 12-1:00 p.m.):"

Includes several programs (rotated during time slot): "Issue Forums" (political concerns of community); "County Line" (various interests); "Visions" (Asian interests); "Viva Houston" (Hispanic); "Crossroads" (African American); and Debra Duncan show, Monday thru Friday.

"...[the] following issues that were important to the community in the 4th quarter of 1999"

1. Hunger (4 shows, 3 for 45 minutes total and a Food Drive, 3 hours long)

2. Nov. Election (4 shows, 1:42)

3. Y2K (1 hour, 2 programs)

4. Breast Cancer awareness (1 show, 30 minutes)
  5. Children First (1 show, 30 min)
  6. Boot camps (1 show, 30 min)
- Then "KTRK-TV News programs" (listed)

General Observations: It would have been difficult to determine what all programs were developed relating to the Ascertainment issues; or, how programs listed related to specific Houston community. Overall, it doesn't seem like much community programming for four month period. Query: does a food drive really cover the issues of hunger;

3. **Petition to Deny**, dated 1993, by Houston resident Gloria Trevino Turner, "concerning injustice to minorities" (petition to deny was denied)

4. **Files of "Issues and Problems of Concern,"** a master list, not in order of importance and based on compilation of phone calls and ascertainment (last update 1993)

5. **"Children's Programming Report, 10/1/99-12/31/99, filed 1/10/00)**

**"FCC 398 Submission Results"**

Disney's Pepper Ann; Disney's Doug; Sabrina, the Animated Series; Bugs Bunny; Winnie the Pooh; Squigglevision; ABC Kids Matinee

Number of "Network Commercial Minutes" : **11 minutes** on Saturdays, between 6:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. (4:30 for local commercials). Format allows for 3- 1:34 station breaks, of which 1:30 only for each may be used for local commercial matter" "Format allows 2-1:04 station breaks, of which 1:00 only for each may be used for local commercial matter" (Note: # commercials at other times were not indicated, or at least, apparent)

6. **Viewer Letters** (Note: all actual communications in files)

7. **"Annual Employment Report"** (Note: 1997 in files, '98 missing, '99 not available until March 2000—a copy of 98 will be sent to Carlos Calbillo)

KRIV-TV, Channel 26, FOX

(Arrived at 2:10, got in at 2:30 p.m., Assisted by Lisa Whitlock and Cindy?)

General Observations: Files located in a locked room in locked cabinets; accompanied at all times by staff; staff was helpful; Lisa Whitlock said she was a department of one, she's in charge of community programs including doing the ascertainment and some production.

**Files:**

**1. Ascertainments, 4th quarter, 1999**

Observations: Organized differently than previous station, categories such as "Family", "Local Government", "Transportation/Traffic", "Prejudice/Racism" etc. Each section had a page for each program or piece that related to that category. National pieces were included with local and mixed together. Few seemed to actually be local productions. Noticed that there were often duplications of programming listed in different categories, eg, piece on "2000 Countdown" was included in categories "Local Government" and in "Family"; another piece on "Texas Veterans Scam" listed as "Local Govt" and "Family"; "High School Kid Shot" story repeated in "Prejudice/Racism" and "Family", "Survivors of School Violence" program repeated in "Random Violence" and in "Family" section (more examples available)

Actual ascertainment forms were not available.

**2. Issues/Problems File**

Observation: contained daily "FCC Content Log Report" e.g., Friday, 12/31/99 contained 3:31:00 of commercials: 29:40 of PSA's; and 40:30 of promotional materials.

Observation: In 4th Quarter 1999 10/8/99 to 12/18/99, 17 PSAs were aired (not local)

**3. Employment Log 1999**



# U N I V E R S I T Y   o f   H O U S T O N

School of Communication

Houston, TX 77204-3786

Fax: 713/743-2876  
713/743-3002



February 28, 2000

Commissioner William Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Commissioner Kennard:


I would like to commend the Federal Communications Commission for initiating a Notice of Inquiry into the rules and obligations that would accompany the transition to digital television and strongly urge you to take the next step by opening a Notice of Inquiry and Proposed Rulemaking. The transition affecting the medium of television that has already been set in motion by regulators and the private sector should improve more than just the technology of television. The motivations driving such a transition should go well beyond creating an environment which increases the potential profit margins of private media conglomerates. This is an unprecedented opportunity to improve the overall quality of television.

Regulators are faced with the chance to establish new ground rules for the emerging media environment. The FCC can now clarify the ambiguities in the phrase "the public interest, convenience and necessity" which have made the definition and enforcement of public interest obligations difficult. The agency can reassert itself as an empowered public trustee. The Commission needs to work with private industry, but not cower to the whims and desires of the private sector, nor buy into the rhetoric that the marketplace can solve all problems. A previous FCC Commissioner during the Reagan administration allegedly argued that a television is nothing more than a toaster with pictures. This sentiment is not only misleading, but potentially dangerous. Both are electrical appliances, but the differences far outweigh the similarities. The negative or positive social impact of a toaster is inconsequential, the impact of television is immeasurable.

In light of the recent growth of media conglomerates and the inherent power reflected in the sheer size of such entities, the needs of the American public have to be balanced against the insatiable desire for profits. There are two areas in particular that cannot be left to the free market regulation. While other nations have enacted strong protections guarding their children against commercialism, the US has enacted comparatively minimal safeguards. I encourage the FCC to revisit the mandates of the Children's Television Act of 1990 and to further define and bolster the hourly educational programming requirements in light of the increased spectrum given to broadcasters. With the globalization of media ownership, local programming may become an increasingly lower priority. I am old enough to remember the days when local stations provided public affairs programming, and I have witnessed a steady decline over the past two decades. Today, most stations provide local news, which is being watered down by insipid stories and blatant program promotions, and not much else in this area. As many cities have only one major daily newspaper, local station coverage of events and important community issues is even more critical. Unfortunately, such material may not generate high ratings, and as a result, it may go uncovered leaving the public uninformed. Broadcasters have an obligation to the public which must not take the back seat to their obligations to their investors and the stakeholders. The only way to truly ensure that broadcasters meet such a responsibility is to enforce such an obligation through rules. Television viewers are not only consumers, but they are also citizens. To ensure that our democracy remains strong and vital, we must provide the information infrastructure and free flow of information needed to cultivate a well informed populace.

As a general rule, like most Americans I am opposed to overly restrictive governmental regulations and I am against the unnecessary intrusion of government agencies in the private sectors. The media are one area where the public requires the guidance and the protections that are established in enforceable rules set by government agencies. The transition to digital television is exciting, and the FCC has the opportunity to protect the American public by helping to implement rules which would serve to minimize the negative impact of the medium of television while concurrently stimulating the prosocial impact of one of the most powerful cultural forces of our day.

Sincerely,



David R. Donnelly, Ph.D.  
Director, International Telecommunications Research Institute  
Associate Professor

From: kkapusta@hotmail.com

Subject: People for Better TV

Date: 30 Jan 2000

Karen Kapusta-Pofahl  
500 Audra Lane Apt. C  
Denton, TX 76201-6495

Chairman William E. Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

I believe the airwaves are a public trust and I want to know that the public has been consulted before those airwaves are given away. No one has asked me how TV can better serve me or my family.

I understand that television broadcasters in major cities across the United States will begin using additional public airwaves to broadcast digital television signals on May 1, 1999. I am sure that digital broadcasting will offer many opportunities, but I want to know what responsibilities broadcasters will perform in exchange for the free use of the airwaves.

Please begin a proceeding immediately to consider what people like me can expect in return for giving away such valuable public resources to the broadcasters.

Television plays an important and powerful role in my community, and like many Americans I am concerned about the amount of sex and violence on television, the number of commercials during children's programming, the lack of local programming addressing the needs of my community, and the lack of programming accessible to the disabled.

Sincerely,

Karen Kapusta-Pofahl

CC:

Representative William M. (Mac) Thornberry  
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Senator Phil Gramm



**League of United Latin American Citizens  
LULAC District XVIII**

**3522 Polk Street, Houston, Texas 77003 Phone (713) 225-8522**

**March 2, 2000**

**Mr. Marco Grimaldo  
People for Better TV  
818 18<sup>th</sup> St. NW Suite 505  
Washington D.C. 20006**

**Dear Mr. Grimaldo;**

**In 1983 the League of United Latin American Citizens National Office (LULAC) had an audit conducted of network television by Public Advocates, Inc. According to the audit Hispanics had virtually been excluded from the major networks. It is very evidence today that Hispanics are still underrepresented in the major networks.**

**In the Houston area there appears that a decline on public service programs by the television stations has occurred. KHOU-TV Channel 11 (CBS) had a weekly Hispanic program entitled Ola Amigos from about 1971 to 1985. Hispanics protected and were outraged that the station was canceling the Program. Belo Corporation officials met on or about 1992 with community leaders to inform the community about a new program called First Sunday. First Sunday included the total minority community, which resulted with a once a month minority program. First Sunday aired until about 1996. No other public service program exists since then other then a Sat. morning news program.**

**The program something carries small segments of community activities. There was a Community Affairs Department with two people up till March 1999; One person remained to carry out the Community Affairs function. On or about June of 1999, Community Affairs was merged under Marketing and Promotions thereby deleting community affairs.**

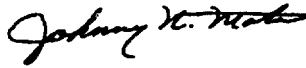
**KTRH TV Channel 13 (ABC)**

**On are about September 1999 KTRH-TV Channel 13 under went Public Service program reorganization and began Community Close Up, which consist of Viva Houston, Cross roads, Vision-Asian, County Line and Issues. Viva Houston was a Hispanic Thirty minute once a week program as was Cross Road an African-American program. The station continues to maintain a three person Community Relations Office, but programming of Cross Roads and Viva Houston programs has been reduced drastically.**

KPRC-TV Channel 2 (NBC) also had a Hispanic Public Service Program several years back that no longer is on the air. We have not touched on the other stations due to the availability of time.

Hispanics and other persons of color and groups in Houston and surrounding areas as well as on the national level would greatly benefit by the Federal Communications Commission continued work in assuring that the television and radio industry through their programming be more responsive to our communities. LULAC will continue to monitor television programs with the help of organizations such as People for Better TV and others to ensure progress in this area, thank you for work assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Johnny N. Mata".

Johnny N. Mata  
Media Relations and Communications

# Arizona Consumers Council

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February 27, 2000

## People for Better TV

The Arizona Consumers Council receives consumer complaints and also questions from consumers in our state. A number of calls are related to Television programming.

Consumers believe that there are too many commercials during many programs. Sometimes three in succession and they are repeating commercials that are shorter again during a program. In some cases there is almost more commercial time than program time. The television channels are being given to broadcasters without any restrictions as to commercials.

There are not enough local programs dealing with important local issues. Local elections had very little public programming on local transportation or initiative issues or information about what is happening in our state legislature. There is a city channel, but seldom is any of this -often important information-broadcast on other channels. Many people do not constantly watch the city channel and miss this information.

As newspaper readership is diminishing, television is relied upon, more and more, for all of the information that people receive on local issues and these are often not addressed.

We believe that there needs to be hearings on oversight and rules that will benefit the public.

Sincerely,



Phyllis Rowe  
President

### Address:

P. O. Box 1288  
Phoenix, AZ 85001  
602-265-9625 voice  
602-263-7465 fax  
e-mail: [prowe@primenet.com](mailto:prowe@primenet.com)  
Tucson: 520-327-0241 voice

March 1, 2000

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my views concerning the responsibilities of digital broadcasters. I am concerned that television broadcasters do not serve everyone equally. I live in the Phoenix area. I am blind and I am hearing impaired. Currently, the only station which I know of that is offering video descriptive services is channel eight, the local public broadcast station. This means that I cannot enjoy the local news, weather, or any of the community or public affairs programming which are offered by the other stations.

New technologies offer many promises, but may also pose some serious problems. As an example, I should say that I am looking forward to my birthday gift this year which will be an attachment to my television which will allow me to receive the video descriptive signals from channel eight. This device is expensive and for many who are blind, the added cost would be prohibitive. I have to wonder if given changes in technology, I will have to buy another device in the future. I have heard that we will need to buy new television sets to receive digital signals and I would like to be sure that you fully consider how this will impact persons with disabilities. I want to be sure that the technology, including both software and hardware will be standardized and accessible to all.

I am very involved in my community and I value the role that television plays in educating the public. I am a member of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and I formerly served as LULAC National Vice-president for Women. I am concerned that the broadcasters in my area do not fairly represent Latinos or women on television. I believe that broadcasters should do more to reach out to diverse populations as a way to better serve the communities which they are licensed to serve. I think that this would help in getting out the real story about the good things which happen in our neighborhoods. As it is, I think broadcasters pay too much attention to car accidents, crimes and disasters and too little attention to the good work which goes on day to day. I am also concerned that broadcasters reach Indian reservations and other rural communities which would otherwise be left out of public debate and community information.

I previously owned a radio station and we made special efforts to reach out to diverse communities. I do not see television stations making an effort to provide real community programming responsive to the day-to-day realities in our neighborhoods.

I understand that Congress gave away the use of the public airwaves to broadcasters for the transmission of digital signals. I believe that broadcasters stand to make a great deal of money as a result of this new capacity and I would like to know what I as a citizen can expect in exchange for this give away.

Julia Zozaya  
4548 West Osborn  
Phoenix, AZ 85031

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# CALIFORNIA

## Los Angeles

Tab D-5a

Xandra Kayden  
League of Woman Voters - Los Angeles  
Los Angeles, CA  
3/6/00

Bong Hwan Kim  
MultiCultural Collaborative  
Los Angeles, CA  
3/7/00

Alicia Maldonado  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund  
Los Angeles, CA  
3/6/00

Cher McIntyre  
Consumer Action  
Los Angeles, CA  
2/25/00

Peter T. Morgan  
Los Angeles, CA  
3/9/00

Laurie Trotta  
Mediascope  
Studio City, CA  
3/8/00